THE SAGA OF ANATAHAN

WRITTEN, PHOTOGRAPHED AND DIRECTED
BY
JOSEF VON STERNBERG

Produced by DAIWA Production, Inc. Japan

THE SAGA OF ANATAHAN

DAIWA PRODUCTIONS, INC. of JAPAN and JOSEF VON STERNBERG present

THE SAGA OF ANATAHAN

A Postscript to the Pacific Conflict

Written, Photographed and Directed by

JOSEF VON STERNBERG

THE CAST OF PLAYERS

The "Queen Bee"	Akemi NEGISHI
The "Husband"	SUGANUMA
The 5 "Drones"	SAWAMURA, NAKAYAMA, FUJIKAWA, KONDO, MIYASHITA
The 2 Skippers	TSURUEMON, KIKUJI
At the Shamisen	ROKURIRO
The Homesick Ones	TAMURA, KITAGAWA, SUZUKI
The Patriot	AMIKURA

THE PRODUCTION STAFF

The Producer	TAKIMURA
Director Assistant	TAGUCHI
At the Camera	OKAZAKI
Script and Dialogue	ASANO
Special Assistant	OKAWA
The Composer	IFUKUBE
Art Director	KONO
Artist	WATANABE
Specialist	TSUBURAYA
Recorder	KASE
Assistant Director	IWASHITA
Editor	MIYATA

Western Electric Recording

Length : 8,270 ft. Running Time : 92 min. Reels : 9

This was filmed in a studio constructed for this purpose in KYOTO, the ancient capital of Japan.

Foreign Sales : TOWA FILM CORPORATION

A scene from "THE SAGA OF ANATAHAN"
Keiko (Akemi Negishi-*right*) and her husband
(Tadashi Suganuma-*left*)

(left to right) NAKAYAMA, KONDO and NEGISHI

Synopsis

IT is the fourth year of the Pacific War.

On the morning of June 12th, 1944, a convoy of 5 bonito fishing vessels was sailing towards Saipan carrying much needed supplies to that outpost. Just as they were sailing past the Mariana Archipelago, enemy war planes suddenly swooped down on them, annihilating the convoy and killing more than half of the crews. A few survivors barely managed to swim ashore on Anatahan Islands.

At first, the survivors believed that the Imperial Navy would soon come to rescue them. No one even dreamt that they were to be marooned on this lonely island for 7 long years.

After 6 weeks of hardship in the unfriendly jungle, one of the men discovered a village farther inland. When the men arrived there, they found a mysterious man living there who called himself Kusakabe. They thought he was all alone, when another person appeared from behind him. She was a young woman. This was Keiko.

The men divided themselves into groups and took lodging in the several huts which comprised the village. The long rainy season started and never seemed to end. When the rains finally stopped, they were scorched by the blazing tropic sun. Afterwards, a furious typhoon visited them. But the men soon learned how to live in this environment very much like their prehistoric ancestors.

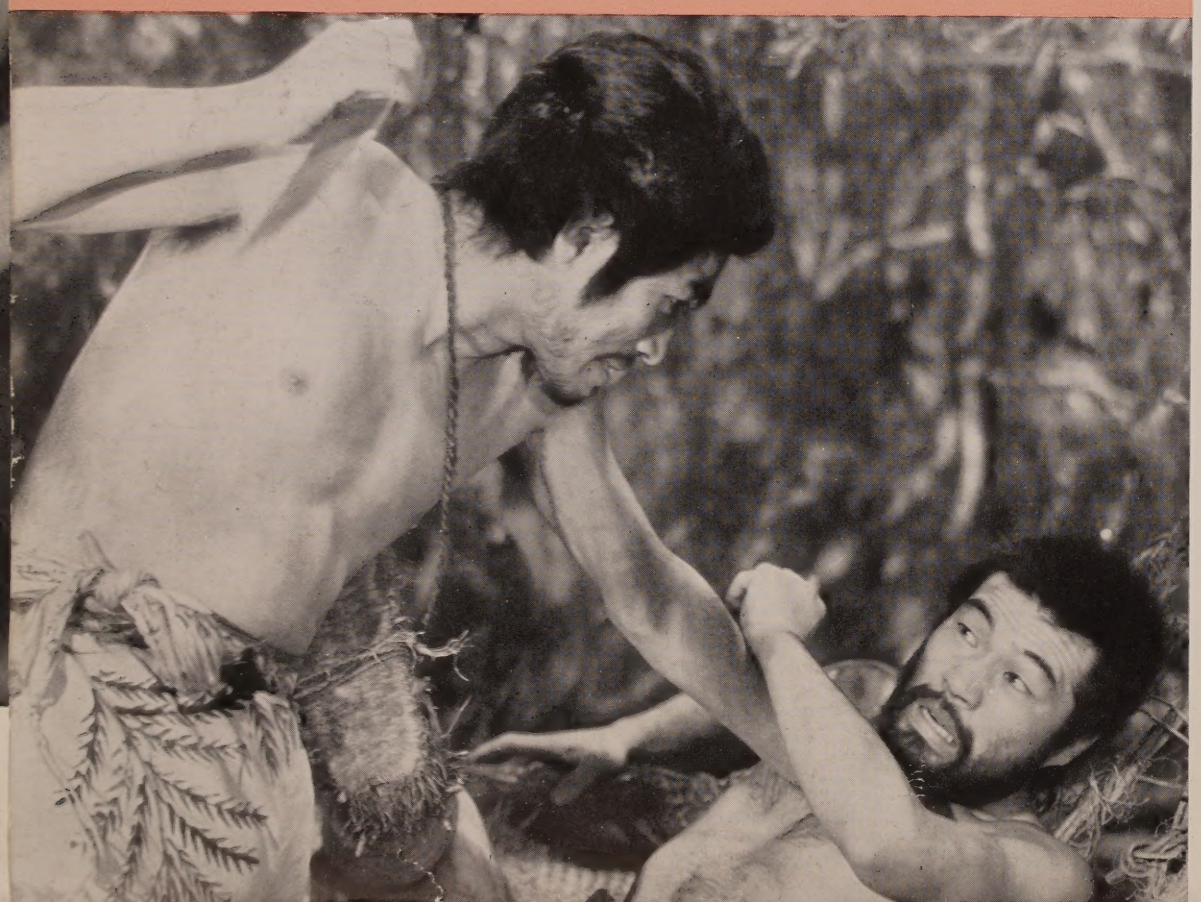
In time, the problem of food supply was solved and they even found a way to make wine out of the sap of tender coconut fronds. With the coming of wine, the men began to take inordinate interest in Keiko. As a result, Kusakabe was driven to insanity from torments of jealously.

Takahashi was the first to pay a visit to Keiko and try to gain her favor. He is discovered by Warrant Officer Amanuma who orders him to stay away from the woman. It is evident that Amanuma himself has designs on Keiko.

With the full moon of the autumnal equinox or the Buddhist "higan" festival, the men's thoughts are carried far away to their loved ones at home. Kusakabe's thoughts turn to his true wife and child who have been evacuated and are not heard from since. Keiko too thinks about her true husband who has been unheard from since he left her to go on a trip to another island. The two of them had thus been brought together to live as man and wife but tonight each had forgotten the other.

Keiko sneaks away from the hut to go to her clandestine meeting with Takahashi. She gives up her body to this chaste youth who is always thinking of his mother. They are discovered by Kusakabe who is mad with jealousy and beats up Keiko like a wild man.

The fateful troubles on Anatahan began with this first dereliction.



With each passing day, Keiko became more and more beautiful and desirable to all the men.

The men began to outdo each other in becoming willing drones to this Queen Bee of the Island. The continuous drinking broke down all semblance of military discipline. A brawl takes place between Seaman First Class Nishio and Warrant Officer Amanuma. It was only through the timely intervention of Takahashi that Amanuma's life is saved. Amanuma's position as the ruler of the island, however, crashes to the ground in a matter of seconds.

Emancipated from the rigors of military discipline, the men became slaves to their flesh. Coconut wine is made to flow freely, and the bawdy singing of the "tsundara" ballad soon turns into a chant inviting Keiko to come out from the hut and join the spree. Kusakabe is unable to control his jealousy and beats Keiko who runs out of the house yelling, "Murder. Murder". The men take this opportunity to tantalize Kusakabe.

At that moment, like a bolt from the clear sky, a message to surrender is heard over a public address system. The voice said that the Emperor had proclaimed surrender on all fronts more than 3 months ago and that the war had ended. This can not be true, the men said to each other. It must certainly be a trick of the enemy. Had not the Imperial Forces only recently completely run over the Asiatic continent and was now holding undisputed control of the whole Pacific area?

The men go to Warrant Officer Amanuma and beg him to resume his command over them. They all voice their confidence in the invincibility of Japan and pledge to resist to the end.

But in far away Japan, hordes of soldiers and sailors are being repatriated. The returned veterans are seen back at their peaceful tasks of reconstructing their homeland.

Ignorant of all this, the men on Anatahan renew their will to defend the island from the enemy. But where was their real enemy? Was it not the feeling of lonesomeness which was gnawing from within their own souls?

About the time, someone discovers the wreck of an enemy plane, deep in the jungle. The men gather around the remains, like vultures, looking for something to salvage. This gift from civilization gives the two rowdies, Nishio and Yananuma, weapons of death. Keiko finds a parachute. The lady-killer Semba finds a ring, Maruyama, the musician, finds some wires with which he fashions a "samisen" guiter. A new mode of life takes place on the island.

With the advent of the musical instrument the men were given relief from their prosaic livelihood. The ring was the cause of Keiko's eloping with Semba. The two men who own the pistols conceal the elopers, harboring some evil designs of their own. The other men begin to scour the jungle for their lost Queen Bee. Keiko is found and brought home but only after Kusakabe has promised not to beat her any more.

Keiko was no longer afraid of Kusakabe.

The men now begin to frequent Kusakabe's hut. Kuroda, the old sailor, and Maruyama, the musician, are the first to visit her openly. The Nisho and Yananuma come and at the point of their guns, force Keiko and Kusakabe to go to live with them at their hut. This was how the Queen Bee came to keep house for the 3 drones at one time.

When Kusakabe left, no longer able to stand this communal life, Nishio and Yananuma fight for the

ownership of Keiko. Semba comes to spy on them and is murdered. Nishio then is murdered by Yananuma who has the two pistols.

While these events passed, 5 years had elapsed on Anatahan. The bloody conflict over Keiko continued but whenever there is a funeral or a New Year's Celebration, the men gather together in an atmosphere of friendliness.

New Year's Day, 1949. The men begin their New Year's Celebration as befitting members of the armed forces. However, the party soon deteriorates into the usual drunken spree with loud singing of the "tsundara" ballad. Keiko jumps up on a table and begins her dancing. The men's eyes glow with desire. Kusakabe can stand this sight no longer. Yananuma who is the current ruler of the island, by virtue of his two pistols, pushes the others away from Keiko, and monopolizing her, leads her back to his hut. Death, however, has already marked him as his next victim.

The man who gains possession of the pistols and becomes the new ruler of the island is none other than Kusakabe.

Keiko is forced to go back to Kusakabe's hut but obedience at the point of the gun is no obedience at all. The feeling between the two is no longer what it had been.

Kusakabe goes out into the jungle in search of food and is stalked and murdered by Yoshiri who becomes the new ruler. Now in possession of the 2 pistols and Keiko, he laughs out aloud not knowing that his life would not last the next 24 hours.

The pistols are thrown away into the bottom of the sea. Keiko is all through—through with life on this island so full of violent tragedies over the fight for her body. The men draw lots to decide who should have her. Amanuma wins his long awaited prize but Keiko, in the meantime, has disappeared from sight. A plane flies overhead and drops leaflets telling them to surrender and that a ship will come to take them home. The men ignore the leaflets and start out to search for Keiko. Keiko also finds the leaflet and believes what is written on it. Old sailor Kuroda discovers Keiko but lets her escape from the island. With Keiko gone from the island, there is no longer bloodshed but there is also no life.

One day a ship approaches the island and leaves some letters from home for the men. These letters are from their wives and children, relatives and friends. There is a letter for Kuroda from Keiko and the men learn that Keiko has returned safely to Japan and had asked their relatives to write to them. Even the die-hard Amanuma has to admit defeat but he declares that he would never return to a defeated Japan and disappears into the depth of the jungle.

The Battle of Anatahan is lost. The men surrender and return once more to their beloved homeland. They meet their relatives and friends they had dreamed about so often on the desolate island.

What became of Keiko? there is no doubt that she must have been at the airport silently witnessing the homecoming scene.

An ECHO from New York

FILMING A FICTIONAL FOOTNOTE TO A WAR

by

HERMAN G. WEINBERG

IN a man-made jungle cluttered with electric cables and junction boxes, in the ancient Japanese capital of Kyoto, Josef von Sternberg is currently filming the celebrated "Anatahan story," a weird footnote to the last war. Far from the glitter of Hollywood, with its luxuriously appointed studios, the director of "The Blue Angel," "Morocco" and "Shanghai Express," among others, has converted a large industrial exhibition hall in Kyoto's Okazaki Park into a studio. Here a South Sea island jungle has been built, complete with ferns, palms, underbrush, thatched huts and a derelict boat. This will be Anatahan, a verdant dot among the Marianas in the South Pacific, where some thirty Japanese men and a single woman held out for several years after Japan's surrender in the last war, refusing to believe in Japan's defeat, and putting up a vain resistance against American occupying forces. To make things that much tougher for themselves, the men fought over the lone woman and several were killed in these frequent skirmishes.

This story, reported in THE NEW YORK TIMES last year, inspired the film but, contrary to expectations, the von Sternberg version of the Anatahan incident will be completely independent of the actual occurrences on the island.

Sympathetic View

"The story as told by the survivors is a sordid one, and I am not interested in it," the director declared. "I am creating, instead, a sympathetic picture of those people." The film, which is being made for the international market, will be an "ambassador for Japan," according to von Sternberg.

"We hope to open the eyes of the world to the great wealth of art in Japan," he remarked. "What is known publicly about Anatahan is not in my mind," he emphasized. "In fact, I would have been pleased if the subject was not known to the world." And, indeed, when the real heroine of Anatahan was in Tokyo, the director said he had little interest in meeting her, because he was not going to produce Kazuko Hika's biographical incidents, but an artistic film based on this episode.

For his screen heroine, the discoverer of Marlene Dietrich found a 19-year-old dancer, the pulchritudinous Akemi Negishi, an unbilled member of the Nichigeki Dancing Team. Interviewed during a recess in her act, Miss Negishi told reporters, "I don't understand why Mr. von Sternberg picked me for the part."

Not a single shot will be filmed in the actual locale. There will not even be any process shots by which actual backgrounds are "grafted" on to the foreground action. The entire development of the story will be photographed in the improvised studio jungle set. According to von Sternberg, there is no need to shoot films in their actual locales—contrary to much current Hollywood practice because, he states, film reality and actual reality are fundamentally different. "Shooting at the actual locale does not necessarily result in an artistic production. The artist's primary attitude is to understand the essence of the reality he seeks."

To the question of production cost, the director caustically replied, "What difference does it make how much it costs? Certainly it won't be more than it gets back."

Asked to comment on Japanese films, he said, "I did not come here as a teacher but as a student. It would be awkward, indeed, if I surrendered my role of movie director for that of a movie critic."

The language problem is a formidable one, he said. "I have a hundred Japanese working for me and it's not easy to keep them well informed and organized." For this reason, the director has devised two methods to overcome the language barrier: (1) a unique diagram showing all characters and their inter-relationships by way of color lines in each sequence, and (2) a set of about thirty drawings to show each sequence pictorially.

Other innovations include the mounting of a Mitchell camera (the only American piece of equipment on the set) on a ten-foot high cylinder in the fashion of an X-ray camera, which can be moved up and down and clamped at any height. This is said to be far more desirable than the conventional tripod mounting because it enables quicker changes of camera levels.

Language Barrier

The chief problem remains a language one, not a technical one. The latter is easily enough mastered by a man who could recreate in California a North African desert outpost so well that the Pasha of Marrakech refused to believe that "Morocco" was not actually filmed there. Since few in the cast of "Anatahan" understand English, everything the American director says must be translated on the spot. Hence, invariably 10 or 15 seconds, if not more, elapse before an actor comes to a halt after von Sternberg shouts, "Hold it!" This can get very enervating after a while. "The language barrier is tremendous," sighs the director.

"Anatahan," as the film will probably be called, is an enterprise of Daiwa Productions, represented by Yoshio Osawa, a Kyoto financier and one-time president of the Toho Film Company; Nagamasa Kawakita, president of Towa Films, Inc., and von Sternberg.

It is not von Sternberg's first visit to Japan. He was there some sixteen years ago, during a world tour—promising his many admirers (his films are very popular there) that he would come back some day to make a film.

He is supremely confident of his first film in Japan. In a recent letter to the writer he said, "It is shaping up beautifully. . . . I intend to set a standard of visual excellence with this picture." As an indication of what can be expected from the director who has already set standards of visual excellence in his past work, notably "Docks of New York," "Shanghai Express," "The Scarlet Empress" and "The Devil Is a Woman," it is most revealing that, in the above quoted passage from his letter, he crossed out the typed word "picture" and wrote "film." There is a difference. In that difference lies the history of the art of the motion pictures.

(From "THE NEW YORK TIMES", Sunday, February 15, 1953)

LIFE
Vol. 31, No. 3 July 16, 1951

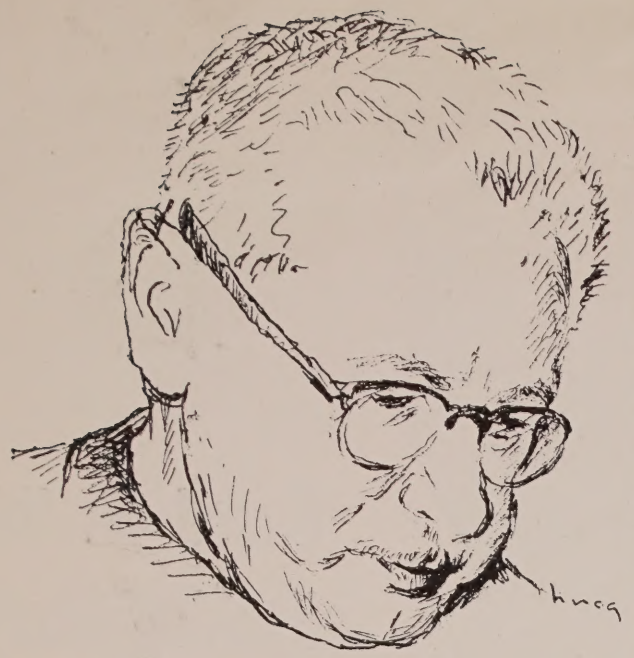
ON THE ROCKY SHORE OF ANATAHAN ISLAND IN THE MARIANAS, 19 LAST DEFENDERS OF THE JAPANESE EMPIRE RAISE THEIR WHITE FLAG OF SURRENDER

ONE WAR, AT LEAST, IS CONCLUDED

Dead ahead of the Navy landing craft lay a stony beach, beyond that only dense jungle—and the enemy. Glasses scanned the beach and probed into the foliage. Suddenly, as if a gust of wind had rattled the palm fronds, there was movement. Like beasts emerging from their lairs, 19 Japanese stood in the sunlight. Forming ranks, they raised their hands and waved a white flag (*above*). Thus, at 10 a.m. on June 30, 1951 on the remote Pacific island of Anatahan, World War II finally ended for the last known forces of the onetime Japanese empire.

It had cost the U.S. 325,500 lives and $340 billion to conclude that struggle—and on top of that 13,000 lives and billions more in the year-old Korean "police action." But at least one war was over. It had been seven years since three small Japanese vessels had been sunk by U.S. dive bombers in the central Marianas. The crew members swam ashore on Anatahan and, unaware of Japan's subsequent defeat, continued to hold their two-by-five-mile island with two rifles and two machine guns. Only 65 miles to the south, on Saipan, the U.S. Navy had been uncomfortably aware of their existence since 1946. But it was not until last month that "Operation Removal" finally was launched. On June 8 a preliminary expedition left the holdouts 200 letters and pictures from their families in Japan and brought back one of the men, Junji Inoue, former engineer, first class in the imperial navy. He hinted at a startling tale of how six of the original 83 men were slain fighting over a 29-year-old Japanese woman (*pp. 22, 23*), and added that all those who remained were dominated by one tough, 26-year-old sailor who reportedly controlled the machine guns. This prompted the landing party to approach cautiously after a Navy plane had already dropped leaflets ordering the holdouts to assemble on the beach at 10 a.m. But on the Navy's arrival, the castaways appeared more apologetic than fearsome. A ranking officer, Katsusaburo Usui, captain of one of the bombed vessels, hastened to explain: "These ignorant people are sorry to have caused so much trouble to the Americans. Six years have passed since the surrender of Japan, but we did not know. We are very sorry."

Based on this shocking story!



JOSEF VON STERNBERG,

The Director

Josef von Sternberg was born in Vienna in 1894. In 1901, he was brought to New York by his parents.

In 1924, he directed and produced "Salvation Hunters".

Not long after that, he made "Underworld", "The Last Command", "The Dragnet", "Docks of New York", and "The Case of Lena Smith".

His first sound film was "Thunderbolt", following that, he made "The Blue Angel", "Morocco", "Dishonored", "An American Tragedy", "Shanghai Express", "Blonde Venus", "Scarlet Empress", "Devil is a Woman", "Crime and Punishment", "The King Steps Out", and "Shanghai Gesture".

During World War II, he worked with the U. S. Government. More recently he made 2 films for R.K.O. He began "Anatahan" in early 1952 and finished it in June 1953.

AT the time, when I first visited Japan, I was so happy with this country and its people that I wished that in some way I could transfer this delight and affection to the rest of the world. My strongest medium of expression is the motion picture, and therefore it was not unusual that I should think of expressing my admiration for this country in a film that would be shown in all other countries. As you know, this hope was not an easy one to design, as a Japanese film rarely plays the world. And so for many years, I sought a subject that would permit me to carry out this plan. I never found one until I read of Anatahan. This solved one of the most pressing difficulties. It gave me the opportunity to depict the Japanese not subjected to a Japanese problem which might not be understood abroad; but the Japanese on Anatahan were part of a sudden misfortune which could happen to anyone any time. And, therefore, this incident could help to bridge the distance between the legend of this country and the readiness (or the lack of it) to understand this country by others.

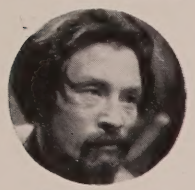
I feared for a long time that in the struggle for power among many nations—the beautiful, simple and highly developed skill of Japanese art might be forgotten—even by the Japanese themselves. This art, which influenced in full measure the world of art abroad was in danger of becoming a minor value, and I wished to remind the world again that Japan has much to offer not only commercially but also artistically.

But there was a greater purpose than this, which made me come so far from home with my family; and this purpose was to express my affection for this country and its people, and to let my work be an ambassador for Japan. I wanted to remind those who may have forgotten, that the Japanese problem is not a Japanese problem but the problem of all mankind. What happens to one can happen to all of us. Japan is not a separate nation—even though it sometimes might wish to be one. It is part of the human family that must learn to live in harmony. I hope the Japanese who have always been kind to my work will be kind to this film also and that they will enjoy it and remember that this film was made not for Japan alone but so that every people on earth might see it. I am sure it will win many friends for Japan, and the winning of friends is one of the good things in life.

Sternberg

根岸 明美
A. NEGISHI

中山 昭二
S. NAKAYAMA

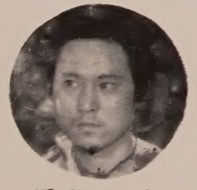


菅沼 正
T. SUGANUMA

網倉 志朗
S. AMIKURA

尾上 菊次
K. ONOE

坂東鶴右衛門
T. BANDO



近藤 宏
H. KONDO

The PLAYERS' WHO'S WHO

Akemi NEGISHI

Born in Tokyo in 1934. (Father, Senzo is Chief of the Bureau, Japan Boy Scout League, Fund Raising Committee. Mother is, Fusako Hitomi, who in the past was on the stage of the Takarazuka Girls Opera.) From the time she was young, she had a longing for the stage. During the war, she endured much hardship, and when her father became unemployed right after the war, she had to quit the Otsuma Girls High. For a while, she worked at a Candy factory but in 1949 her longing for the stage made her lose no time in applying for the Nichigeki Dancing Team when they were taking in new pupils. In October 1952, when she was appearing on the stage in "Chanson de Paris", she was the lucky girl to be spotted by Mr. von Sternberg and selected for "Anatahan". She is 5′ 5″ in height. Motion pictures and music are her hobbies.

Shoji NAKAYAMA

Started off with the Takashi Masuda's Dancing Institute and has mainly devoted himself to the oriental ballet.

Tadashi SUGANUMA

Born in 1921 in Sado Island, Niigata Prefecture. In 1950, his acting in "I was a Prisoner in Siberia" was recognized by Mr. von Sternberg, and he was given a big role in this film.

Shiro AMIKURA

Born in Kofu in 1911. After graduating from Rikkyo University, he entered the Tokyo Takarazuka Theatre. Later became director of the Toho Geino Haikyu. By chance, sitting next to Mr. von Sternberg, at a table in a dining room, he was selected for this film.

Kikuji ONOE

Born in Tokyo in 1892. A Kabuki actor since 1908, attached to the Kikugoro Theatrical Company.

Tsuruemon BANDO

Born in 1887. He is the oldest actor among the cast. In 1897, he became the pupil of M. Iwai, a Kabuki actor. In 1921, he joined the Kikugoro Theatrical Company.

Hiroshi KONDO

Born in Saitama Prefecture in 1925.

Rokuriro KINEYA

Born in Tokyo in 1907. His mother taught him shamisen in his early years. In 1925 he took charge of the musical performance for Sadanji Ichikawa and his company. He is part of the Kikugoro Theatrical Company.

Kisaburo SAWAMURA

Born in 1902. In 1915, since becoming the pupil of Genjuro Sawamura, he has been a kabuki member. He belongs to the Katabami Theatrical Troupe.

Takeshi SUZUKI

Entered Nippon Musical School and studied classic ballet. In 1948, he joined the Komaki Ballet Group. He is the leading solo dancer.

Takashi KITAGAWA

In 1929, he became a film supporting player. At present, he is with Nakata Productions as Producer.

Shozo MIYASHITA

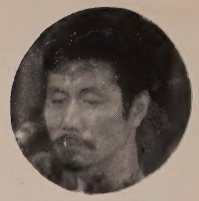
A student of classic ballet.

Daijiro TAMURA

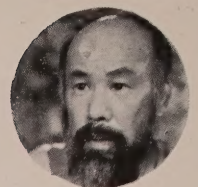
Born in Awaji Island in 1918. Since 1939 he has appeared on the screen.

Jun FUJIKAWA

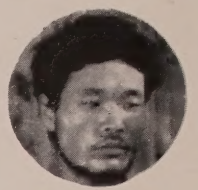
In 1932 became a Shinko actor. He has been in the profession for 20 years.



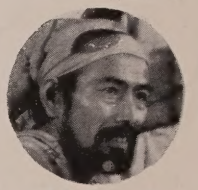
杵屋六里郎
ROKURIRO



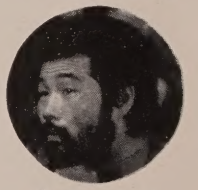
沢村紀三郎
K. SAWAMURA



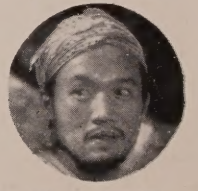
鈴木 武
T. SUZUKI



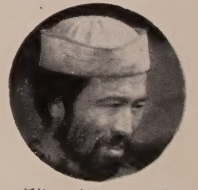
喜多川 隆
T. KITAGAWA



宮下 昭三
S. MIYASHITA



田村大二郎
D. TAMURA



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